



Tri-Party Agreement

A bulletin on Hanford cleanup and compliance

HANFORD UPDATE

September 1999

Ten Years of the Tri-Party Agreement

The Department of Energy, Washington State Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection Agency marked the 10th anniversary of Hanford's Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) in May and June with a series of events and activities on site and in the community.

The commemorative activities culminated in a "town hall" meeting in Richland June 29th, featuring Ecology's Deputy Director Dan Silver, EPA Office of Environmental Cleanup Director Mike Gearheard, Office of River Protection Manager Dick French, new DOE-Richland Manager Keith Klein, and two former Hanford managers - Mike Lawrence and John Wagoner. The panelists shared their perspectives on the first ten years of cleanup and the strength of the Tri-Party Agreement, and responded to questions from audience members and a group of Tri-Cities community leaders. The



program was moderated by Ian Lamont, publisher of the *Tri-City Herald*. Continued Page 6

Secretary Richardson Decides Next Step in the Future of FFTF

Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson has announced that the Energy Department will conduct a National Environmental Policy Act review of the environmental impacts associated with the Fast Flux Test Facility, the next step in determining the future of the reactor. This decision follows the completion and review of a 90-day Fast Flux Test Facility Scoping Plan, requested by the Secretary in May 1999.

"The workers at FFTF, the Hanford community and the American taxpayer have been waiting too long — they deserve a decision on the future of this reactor. I am also committed to maintaining a strong nuclear research infrastructure and my decision to move forward with a National Environmental Policy Act review reflects this commitment," Secretary Richardson said.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), to be

completed in fall 2000, will be supported by a comprehensive technical research and development plan and cost analysis. The EIS will evaluate the environmental effects associated with a range of research and development activities, medical isotope production and plutonium-238 production to fuel NASA spacecraft. The EIS will also evaluate a range of options including the use of existing operating facilities to meet these needs, the re-start and operation of the FFTF, and the construction of entirely new facilities. As such, no preferred alternative will be identified in the draft EIS.

The EIS will be conducted with full and open participation by the public — federal, tribal, state and local governments and others. Participation will include public meetings in Oregon, Washington and Washington, DC.

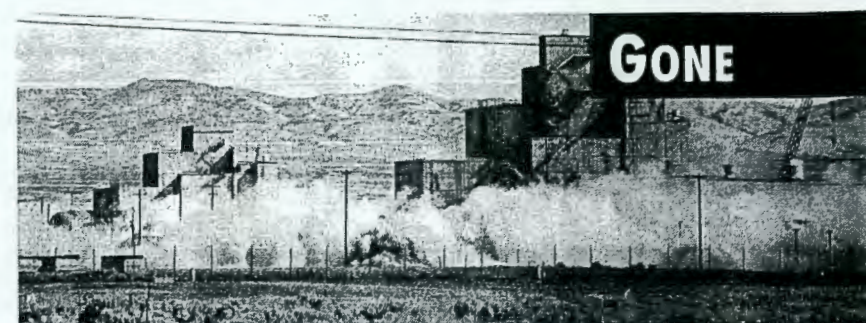
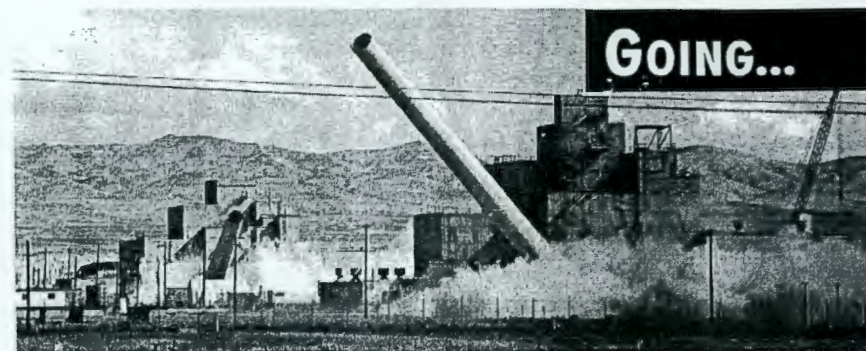
Reactor Stacks Dropped Successfully

Hanford's skyline changed forever on August 14, 1999, when the stacks for two Hanford production reactors that operated side-by-side for almost 20 years were simultaneously dropped to the ground with explosives.

This historic event at the D and DR Reactors is part of the decontamination and decommissioning of the former production reactors by Bechtel Hanford, Inc. It's a continuation of the effort to place Hanford's defunct production reactors into safe storage for up to 75 years. The project, which is similar to the work completed at C Reactor last year, will reduce the footprint of each reactor to about one-fifth of its original size – creating an annualized savings of about \$190,000 per year in surveillance and maintenance costs for each reactor.

Stack removal is one of the final jobs to be completed on the DR Reactor in fiscal year 1999. Thus far, DR Reactor's footprint has been reduced by 40 percent. Cocooning of D Reactor is scheduled to begin in FY 2000 pending funding availability.

The tapered reactor stacks were about 200 feet tall – ranging in diameter from 10.5 feet to 17 feet. They were constructed in the mid-1940s of reinforced concrete and weighed about a million pounds each. The debris is headed for the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility in Hanford's central plateau.



Restructuring Planned for Project Hanford

The Department of Energy has announced it will make major changes to enhance and strengthen performance in Hanford's cleanup projects. The changes will initially focus on the DOE Richland Operations Office and the Project Hanford Management Contract (PHMC), held by Fluor Daniel Hanford (FDH).

"The Department's Richland Office and Fluor Daniel have started implementing changes to the way work is done at Hanford to enable the contractor to increase performance and be more accountable for controlling costs and schedules," said Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson.

Dr. Carolyn Huntoon, the new Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, emphasized that these steps are in line with her priorities to streamline the cleanup work, including DOE's recently announced project management initiatives to bolster overall performance.

DOE and the contractor say they're incorporating lessons learned from the past two years of the PHMC, as well as insights from the recent reviews completed by the National Research Council, in making the changes.

"While we haven't completed the details for the restructuring, we do know that the number of PHMC managers will be reduced in an effort to flatten the organization and focus more of our resources on cleanup activities," explained FDH President Ron Hanson. "We expect between 20 and 30 million dollars will be redirected to targeted cleanup activities."

Among the specific actions planned, according to Hanson, is an 11-month acceleration of K Basins fuel-

handling systems testing. "Another initiative will retrieve buried transuranic waste one year ahead of the Tri-Party Agreement milestone," Hanson said. "Others will accelerate the thermal stabilization of plutonium by six months, and the unique forms of plutonium by two-and-a-half years."

DOE-RL Manager Keith Klein said the changes are in response to his challenge to FDH to reach a new level of performance at Hanford, consistent with Fluor's project management successes around the globe. "We recognize that the massive and complex cleanup job at Hanford mandates that we constantly evaluate ways to get better at our jobs and take best advantage of the dollars available to us," Klein said. "We must meet our cleanup and compliance obligations at Hanford by taking a quantum step to improve performance."

Klein also noted that there will be some changes in how DOE-RL does work. "Our job is to be a demanding, informed customer," he said. "We must create the environment that allows our contractor to bring best commercial practices to solving Hanford's problems. We must be very clear on our performance expectations, the terms and conditions for doing work, and ensure proper rewards for success."

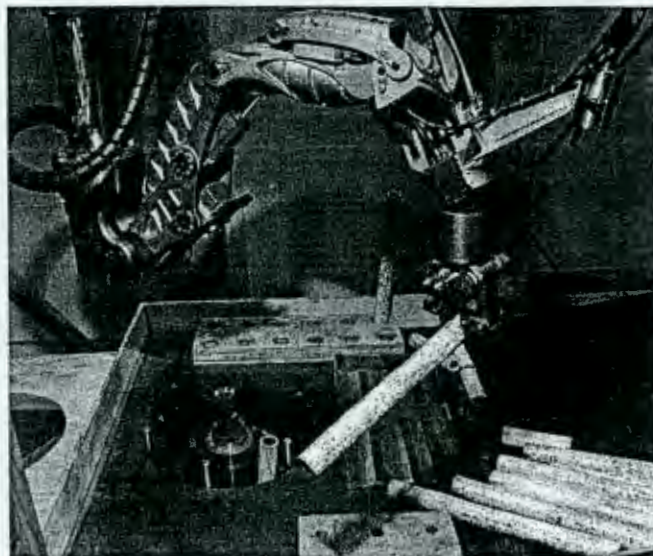
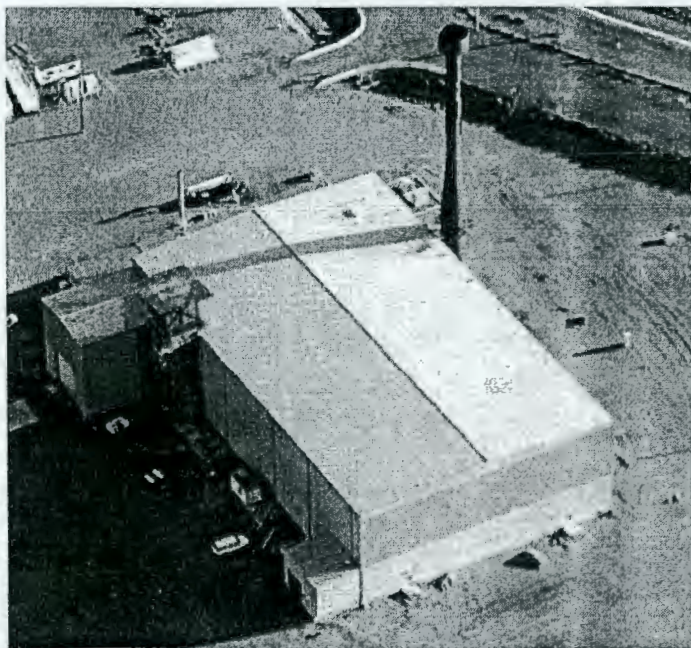
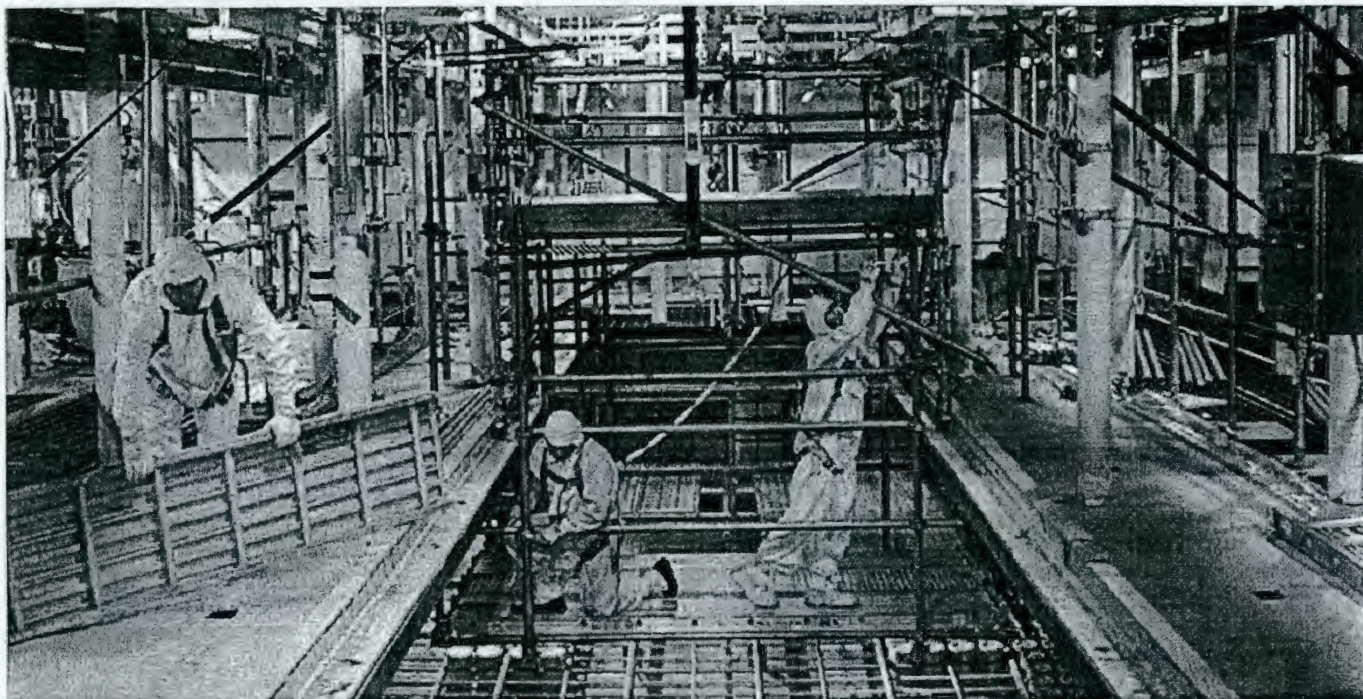
"In this regard, DOE and Fluor are in the process of identifying specific progress markers, those on-the-ground accomplishments over the next year that will convince us all that the steps we are taking today are bearing results," Klein said.

When the PHMC organizational changes are fully implemented and coupled with new incentives, DOE and the contractor expect to see significant savings that can be redirected to appropriate cleanup activities.

Public Comment Period Changed

The public comment period for the proposed modifications to the Hanford Facility-Wide RCRA Permit has been changed from August 16, 1999, and will now begin September 20, 1999. The comment period will last 60 days with a public meeting tentatively planned for October. The close of the comment period will be on Monday November 22, 1999. Be looking in the *Hanford Happenings Calendar* for upcoming information.

If you have questions or comments, please call Laura Ruud at the Department of Ecology Nuclear Waste Program, 509-736-5715.



With an approved project baseline in place since late 1998, the K Basins project is in the process of working the plan with all eyes on the start of fuel movement from the K West Basin by November 2000. The Canister Storage Building in 200 East that will store the spent nuclear fuel is now 87% complete. The Cold Vacuum Drying Facility is now 79% complete. Most of the construction activities in the K West Basin are completed, leaving the ramp-up to operations as the last main activity.

A PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD: SITE-SPECIFIC ADVISORY BOARDS

BY MERILYN REEVES, CHAIR

The Hanford Advisory Board was established four years ago to provide advice to the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies on Hanford cleanup and waste management. The Board includes representatives of local and regional governments, Native American tribes, business interests, workers, the State of Oregon, environmental organizations, agencies, public interest groups, and the public-at-large. The Board is chaired by Marilyn Reeves, a public-at-large member with the Oregon League of Women Voters. George Kyriazis, a retired Hanford manager now with the City of Kennewick, serves as the Board's vice chair. Principles adopted by the Board have helped to form a Northwest stakeholder vision of what the Hanford Site should be like in the future.

Site Specific Advisory Boards (SSABs)

The Hanford Advisory Board is part of a national network of twelve Site Specific Advisory Boards authorized by a single charter under the Federal Advisory Committee act. Each Board provides advice on the cleanup and stabilization of radioactive and hazardous waste left over from the 50 years of nuclear weapon production.

Advisory Boards are established for DOE sites in Colorado, Idaho, Kentucky, New Mexico, Nevada, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and of course Washington. Some states have more than one site with a SSAB and not all production locations have established a Board.

The SSABs have many things in common including similarities in contaminants that require stabilization and cleanup. The production of nuclear weapons began with the

mining of uranium. Each kilogram of plutonium required about 1000 tons of uranium ore. The uranium was refined at Fernald in Ohio and then sent to enrichment plants at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Paducah, Kentucky and Portsmouth, Ohio. Hanford and the Savannah River plant in South Carolina used the metallic uranium in plutonium production reactors. Rocky Flats in Colorado machined the plutonium into warhead components and the Pantex site in Texas completed the final warhead assembly. Each step in the production process produced huge volumes of waste, some stored in tanks, silos, barrels and some just dumped on the ground. The challenge for Advisory Boards is to understand the complexities of cleanup and provide advice on the best way to keep radioactive and hazardous materials out of harms way for tens of thousands of years.

What are Local Site Board Responsibilities?

- Submitting consensus advice and recommendations to DOE, EPA and state regulators on key issues.
- Representing and communicating the diversity of community views in their discussions.
- Keeping the public informed on key issues, upcoming decisions, and board recommendations.

DOE's obligations to the local site boards include:

- Keeping the boards informed about key issues and upcoming decisions.
- Requesting recommendations well in advance of DOE deadlines.
- Considering and responding in a timely manner to all board recommendations.
- Providing adequate funding for administrative and technical support.

All of the Site Specific Advisory Boards must cope with procedural and membership issues. They must determine how many meetings are needed and what committee structure is best to focus on site issues. Size and funding for the Boards varies and determining priorities is sometimes very difficult. The Boards strive for a diversity of views, cultures and demographics.

According to evaluation surveys conducted in 1996 and 1997, over 70% of respondents indicated that the Boards facilitated exchange of viewpoints. About 70% indicated that the Boards help define the site problems and about 56% believe that because of the existence of the Boards site actions are more acceptable to regulators, DOE, and the public.

What has Resulted from SSAB Meetings?

Since 1994, the local site boards provided hundreds of recommendations. According to DOE officials many of these recommendations have saved taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

- At *Fernald*, the local site advisory board recommended an accelerated cleanup plan, coupled with a less stringent (industrial) cleanup standard and on-site disposal of low-level radioactive waste—recommendations that could save DOE over \$2 billion.
- At *Hanford*, within its first year, the board recommended that the Department reduce indirect and overhead costs, saving more than \$200 million. Additionally, the board recommended against DOE building six new double-shelled tanks. As a result, the Department avoided over \$375 million in unnecessary costs.
- At *Sandia National Laboratory*, the local board supported the development and permitting of an innovative facility for storing, treating, and containing hazardous wastes. This will save Sandia \$10 million

and reduce the cleanup timetable by one year.

- At the *Idaho National Engineering & Environmental Laboratory*, the board recommended that DOE use the most efficient and cost-effective method for remediating ground water contaminated with hazardous chemicals—resulting in a savings of more than \$6.5 million.
- At *Pantex*, the local advisory board recommended that the Department use the site as both its nuclear weapons assembly, disassembly, and maintenance facility, and its High Explosive manufacturing site under the Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program. This program, which was adopted in 1997, has been estimated as saving DOE \$3 million in annual operating costs.
- At the *Savannah River Site*, the local site board recommended the accelerated closure of high-level waste tanks. This advice resulted in the closure of DOE's first high-level waste tank—Tank 17—in August 1997, followed by the closure of Tank 20 in December 1997.

How You Can Be Involved?

Advisory board meetings serve as a two-way exchange between members of the public and DOE. The Hanford Advisory Board encourages the public to attend its meetings and would like to hear from you about the issues and concerns you have about cleanup at Hanford. Public comment periods are provided two times during each day of the Board meetings. The next meeting will be held September 9th and 10th in Seattle, Washington.

The SSAB's meet twice a year at various sites providing members an opportunity to tour facilities and gain better understanding of the problems at each site. Generally the Chair and Vice-Chair of the SSAB attend these meetings. The Hanford Advisory Board will host the next meeting scheduled for September 21st through September 23rd. A site tour is planned and the Yakama Nations are hosting a special social at the Yakama Indian Culture Center in Toppenish, Washington. For additional information about SSAB's or the September meeting contact 509-943-1804 or check the Home page (<http://www.hanford.gov/boards/hab/index.htm>). All SSAB meetings are open to the public and public comment time is scheduled.

Hanford Happenings

Cleanup is underway at Hanford and the number of actions requiring public participation remains steady. The Tri-Party Agencies (The U.S. Department of Energy, Washington State Department of Ecology, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) offer this monthly calendar to help you keep track of scheduled meetings, public comment opportunities and events. For the latest information, and the unavoidable changes in schedules, call the Hanford Cleanup toll-free number at 1-800-321-2008.

September

September 1

- **Hanford Public Interest Network (HPIN) meeting;** 1:30 – 5:00 p.m., Ecology Headquarters, 300 Desmond Drive, Lacey, Washington. This is a meeting for designated representatives from Hanford Public Interest groups and Ecology's Nuclear Waste Program to discuss current Hanford issues, including the status of cleanup activities, budget issues and public involvement opportunities. This meeting is open to the public. For more information, contact Mary Anne Wuennecke at (509) 736-3036.

September 7 – 8

- **Hanford Openness Workshop;** Sept. 7, 1-5 p.m., Sept. 8, 9 a.m. - noon, Radisson Hotel, 17001 Pacific Hwy. S. Seattle, Washington. The Hanford Openness Workshop (HOW) includes representatives from DOE-RL, Ecology, Consortium for Risk Evaluation, Oregon Office of Energy, and regional Tribal and citizen representatives. The mission of the group is, "to resolve issues impeding the availability of information important to public health, the environment, and decision making...". This meeting is open to the public. For more information, contact Yvonne Sherman (509) 376-6216.

September 8

- **TPA Quarterly Public Involvement Planning Meeting;** 1:00 – 3:00 p.m., Radisson Hotel, 17001 Pacific Hwy. S., Seattle, Washington. This meeting is for Tri-Party Agencies public involvement staff, and interested members of the public, to plan Hanford public involvement activities for the next quarter. This meeting is open to the public. For more information, contact Gail McClure at (509) 373-5647.
- **Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) Public Involvement Committee meeting;** 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., Radisson Hotel, 17001 Pacific Hwy. S., Seattle, Washington. The HAB Public Involvement Committee consists of members of the HAB. This meeting provides the committee and the Tri-Party Agencies an opportunity to discuss current Hanford public involvement activities. This meeting is open to the public. For more information, contact Gail McClure at (509) 373-5647.

September 8 – 9

- **Hanford Natural Resource Trustee Council meeting;** Lapwai, Idaho. The Council is a collaborative working group chartered to address natural resources impacted by Hanford Site releases of hazardous substances. This meeting is open to the public. For more information, contact Teri Elzie (509) 372-9108.

September 9-10

- **Hanford Advisory Board meeting;** Tentative times are 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. (September 9); 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (September 10); Radisson Hotel, 17001 Pacific Hwy. S., Seattle, Washington. The Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) is an independent, non-partisan group, whose representation includes Hanford public interest groups, Northwest regional communities and governments, tribal nations and business interests. The HAB discusses current Hanford cleanup issues and provides advice on site cleanup and waste management to the Tri-Party

Agencies. This meeting is open for public attendance. For more information, please contact Gail McClure at (509) 373-5647.

September 15-17

- **Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration Project Expert Panel Meeting.** Tentative Times are: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday (September 15-16); 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon Friday (September 17); Bechtel Corporate Center, Assembly Room, 3350 George Washington Way, Richland, Washington. The Expert Panel has been established to provide broad oversight, and focus on problem resolution and technical review. The Expert Panel consists of eight members, and has the ability to establish sub-panels to address specific technical areas.

For more information, contact Virginia Rohay at (509) 372-9098.

September 16

- **Hanford Advisory Board Environmental Restoration Committee meeting;** 9:00 – 4:00 p.m., Bechtel Hanford Building (conference room 2D01), 3350 George Washington Way, Richland, Washington. The Environmental Restoration Committee provides input and draft advice to the full Board on specific projects and issues (including technical, budget and public involvement) relating to the Environmental Restoration Project and the Facilities Transition Program. This meeting is open to the public. For more information, contact Nancy Myers at (509) 372-9059.

September 21

- **Hanford Advisory Board Dollars and Sense Committee meeting;** 9:00 - 4:00 p.m. Location TBD. This committee reviews the budget process, cost effectiveness of cleanup work, economic transition and stability, and contractual issues related to DOE, and provides advice to the Tri-Party Agencies. This meeting is open to the public. For more information, contact Chris Chamberlain at (509) 943-5319.

September 24

- **Hanford Advisory Board Tank Waste Treatment Ad Hoc Committee;** 8 a.m. - 3 p.m., 2420 Stevens Center Place, Room 126, Richland, Washington. Currently, the committee is looking how to assist the Tri-Party Agencies agree to milestones, keep the project on schedule and on budget, and ensuring adequate funding is available for tank waste treatment. This meeting is open to the public. For more information, contact Barb Wise (509) 372-3269.

September 28

- **DOE Regulatory Unit meeting with BNFL, September Topical Meeting;** 1:00 - 5:00 p.m., Walkley Room, 3000 George Washington Way, Richland, Washington. The DOE regulatory unit meetings focus primarily on the BNFL Vitrification complex safety issues. Specifically in September, topics for discussion will be explosive hazards and control strategies for mitigating the consequences to workers, the public, and the environment. This meeting is open to the public. For more information contact George Kalman (509) 372-0652.

October

October 13

- **Hanford Advisory Board Health Safety and Waste Management Committee meeting;** 9:00-4:00 p.m. Portland, Or. The Health, Safety and Waste Management Committee focuses on the removal of spent fuel from the K Basins, waste management, removal of materials from the PFP, and intersite waste transfer. This meeting is open to the public. For more information, contact Barb Wise at (509) 372-3269.

October 14

- **Hanford Advisory Board Environmental Restoration Committee meeting;** 9:00-4:00 p.m., Bechtel Hanford Building, Assembly Room, 3350 George Washington Way, Richland, Washington. (See above description for specific details). For more information, contact Nancy Myers at (509) 372-9059

October 20

- The Washington State Department of Ecology will be hosting a public meeting for the proposed modifications to the **1999 Hanford Facility RCRA Permit**; 7:00-9:00 p.m. Department of Ecology's office, 1315 W 4th Ave, Kennewick, Washington. For more information, contact Laura Ruud (509) 736-5715.

October 26

- **DOE Regulatory Unit meeting with BNFL, October Topical Meeting;** 1:00 - 5:00 p.m., Walkley Room, 3000 George Washington Way, Richland, Washington. (See above for general descriptions). October topics include; hazards and control strategies associated with the cesium storage tanks and seismic events. For more information, contact George Kalman (509) 372-0652.

Public Comment Periods

September 20 – November 22

A 60-day public comment period is planned for modifications to the **Hanford Facility-Wide Permit**. The permit is modified annually and will include modifications to standard and general facility conditions, Corrective Actions for past practices, Unit-Specific Conditions for final status operations, units undergoing closure, and units in post-closure. For more information, contact Laura Ruud, Department of Ecology, at (509) 736-5715.

October

***TENTATIVE** A 30-day comment period is planned for public comment on the re-issuance of the Air Operating Permit. For more information contact Oliver Wang, Department of Ecology, at (509) 736-3040.

NOTES: Events marked "TENTATIVE" are being planned during this time frame but are not final. For more information contact Gail McClure, U.S. Department of Energy, at (509) 373-5647.

Every effort has been made to list correct information, but dates, times, and locations for particular meetings may change. For more information, please call **the Hanford Hotline at 1-800-321-2008**, or any of the following Hanford Tri-Party Agency's public involvement contacts:

U.S. Department of Energy:

Gail McClure at (509) 373-5647 or email:
gail_m_mcclure@rl.gov

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

Dennis Faulk at (509) 376-8631 or email:
Faulk.dennis@epa.gov

Washington State Dept. of Ecology:

Mary Anne Wuennecke at (509) 736-3036 or
mwue461@ecy.wa.gov

The Hanford Tri-Party Agreement agencies are equal opportunity agencies. If you have special accommodation needs or require this material in an alternate format, please contact Mary Anne Wuennecke at (509) 736-3036 (Voice), (360) 407-6206 (TDD), or by e-mail mwue461@ecy.wa.gov.

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Public Comments Sought on Air Operating Permit

The final draft of the proposed Title V Hanford Site-Wide Air Operating Permit is nearly complete and should be ready for public comment this fall.

The public involvement process is being re-opened after concerns were raised regarding inadequate public notice during the previous round of public comment in the spring of 1998.

Federal legislation requires the U.S. Department of Energy to apply for an Air Operating Permit in order to meet clean air and environmental protection requirements. This draft permit combines federal, state and local regulations into one permit, which covers all US DOE facilities at Hanford. The permit also sets requirements for emissions limits and record-keeping, and requires periodic reports to certify that facilities are meeting the terms and conditions of their permit.

The permit consists of three parts: 1) a license for

radioactive air emissions regulated by the Washington State Department of Health; 2) a permit for non-radioactive air emissions regulated by the Department of Ecology; and 3) open burning and asbestos requirements regulated by the Benton County Clean Air Authority.

The Washington State Department of Ecology, under authority delegated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, will issue an Air Operating Permit following a public comment period and public meeting in the fall of 1999. Comments received from the public on the draft permit will be taken into consideration before a final permit is issued.

Please refer to your *Hanford Happenings* calendar for additional information on when the public comment period and public meeting will be scheduled.

September Meetings Reminder

September 8 TPA Quarterly Public Involvement Planning Meeting 1:00 pm

Radisson Hotel, Seattle

Major agenda items:

- TPA Public Involvement Activities "Look Ahead/Look Back"
- TPA Public Involvement Activities Calendar

Hanford Advisory Board Public Involvement Committee 3:00 pm

Radisson Hotel, Seattle

Major agenda items:

- Update on Ad Hoc Tank Group Public Involvement
- TPA Agency processes for responding to HAB advice and HAB process for reviewing agency responses to HAB Consensus Advice

September 9 Hanford Advisory Board 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm

September 10 Hanford Advisory Board (cont.) 8:30 pm to 5:00 pm

Radisson Hotel, Seattle

Major agenda items:

- Tank Waste/Office of River Protection update
- Environment, Health & Safety Issues
- Spent Fuel Project
- Transportation



HANFORD UPDATE

Ten Years of the Tri-Party Agreement (Continued)

The three parties talked about the considerable progress made in the first decade of cleanup, including deactivation of all nine of Hanford's reactors and three former processing facilities, elimination of untreated liquid discharges to the soil, a significant reduction in the radiation exposure of Hanford workers at the Plutonium Finishing Plant, cleanup along the Columbia River shoreline, and release of the "1100 Area" from the list of EPA Superfund sites. But they also acknowledged that some of Hanford's key cleanup challenges lie ahead – namely safe movement of Hanford's spent nuclear fuel rods and the start of tank waste treatment. "It's difficult work," said EPA's Mike Gearheard. "But our saving grace is our shared commitment to a democratic process and strong public involvement."

Keith Klein, the recently appointed manager of the DOE Richland Operations Office, urged the audience to help him "write a new chapter in Hanford's history" that holds the TPA front and center. "The further we get from World War II and the Cold War, the more chance there is that the sense of moral obligation to cleanup may fade nationally," he said. "We need to make sure the country knows that this is a national issue, not just a Washington/Oregon issue. We need to demonstrate results and do what it takes to see this job through."

• 6 •

Historical Note: The U.S. Department of Energy manages the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington State. Hanford was established during World War II as part of the top secret Manhattan Project to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons. Weapons material production was halted in the late 1980s. The Hanford Site is now engaged in the world's largest cleanup effort to deal with the legacy of radioactive and hazardous wastes that resulted from the plutonium production era. Hanford's cleanup program is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington Department of Ecology under a long term compliance contract called the Tri-Party Agreement. This agreement sets the framework and timelines on the cleanup work so that Hanford meets current environmental standards.

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Hanford Update
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